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Although America has almost achieved the goal of equality of educational opportunity for women, it is questionable whether the pathways to personal fulfillment are the same for women as for men. A synthesis of the findings of 4 major research projects, all of which involve national samples, reveal some interesting differences between the backgrounds, attitudes and aspirations of college men and women. Women tend to come from homes of higher socioeconomic levels than do men and higher proportions of men with lower ability, limited funds and middle class background attend college. Both parents and students seem to feel it is more important for a son to attend college although girls tend to make better grades in high school and are more satisfied with their performance. College women are more likely to support liberal causes, though less likely to dispute dormitory regulations--an issue related to the double standard. Taking all the research together, most women expect to have careers but marriage and family life take priority. Academic disillusionment is common and upperclassmen emphasize the satisfactions of friendships rather than scholastic accomplishments. The college woman juggles 3 pursuits--husband-hunting gaining practical job training, and exploring intellectual potential. Flexibility in educating women is needed and the provision of independent study could meet this need. Women should be encouraged to develop academic programs suitable for their wants and interests. (JS)

COLLEGE WOMEN: A RESEARCH DESCRIPTION*

K. Patricia Cross

For more than a century now, America has plodded steadily toward the goal of equality of educational opportunity for women. In 1837, Oberlin College kicked off the campaign by providing "the misjudged and neglected sex all the instructive privileges which have hitherto unreasonably distinguished the leading sex from theirs." Nineteen sixty-eight finds us in the final stages of removing the last vestiges of distinction between education for men and education for women. The men's colleges are courting the women's colleges with the honorable intention of co-education. Closing hours and other women's regulations are giving way to equality before the disciplinary boards, and deans of women are turning into associate deans of students. And all the while the researchers are grinding out separate norms for men and women, since the computer -- which is neuter -- seems to recognize differences between the sexes on all manner of educational variables. Perhaps it is time to stop and ask ourselves if equal opportunity is the same thing as equal education. No one -- least of all, highly educated women -- can deny that education should provide men and women with equal opportunities for personal development.

The question I want to raise is whether the pathways to maximum personal fulfillment are necessarily the same for women as for men.

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* Prepared for the Annual Meeting of the National Association of Women Deans & Counselors, Chicago, Illinois, April 5, 1968.

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One of the ways to shed some light on this question, is to look at men and women students as they describe themselves -- their past accomplishments, their present interests and attitudes, and their future aspirations and goals.

In recent years, the student has been the subject of a rash of research studies. Rather than summarizing any particular study, I should like to attempt a synthesis of the findings across a broad spectrum of studies. Synthesis is not without its hazards, for as Webster says, synthesis stresses "the combining of often diverse conceptions into a coherent whole." After studying the research I know that the conceptions are diverse; I can only hope that the whole will be coherent.

For purposes of this report, I shall not identify the source of each research finding. For the purists among you, appropriate referencing will be found in the NAWDC paper. I will, however, give credit where credit is due by stating that the major sources of data are the following four research projects, all of which involve national samples of students:

1. The Office of Research of the American Council on Education conducted a survey in 1966 and again in 1967 which involved some 250,000 freshmen attending over 300 institutions. Many of your universities participated in this survey, and you may have had an opportunity to study the data for your own student body (1, 10).

2. SCOPE, an acronym for School to College: Opportunities for Post Secondary Education, is a longitudinal study of some 90,000 high school students as they move into jobs, marriage, junior colleges, or four year colleges and universities. The research is now in progress at the Center for Research and Development in Higher Education at the University of California in Berkeley, and it is under the sponsorship of the College Board (2, 11).

3. The College Student Questionnaires are research instruments developed by Educational Testing Service and available to colleges for conducting research on the characteristics of their own students. I shall use the 1966 and 68 ETS normative data which give separate norms for college freshmen and for upper classmen. Some of your institutions may be among the more than 200 colleges which have administered the CSQ to date (5, 6).

4. The High School Graduate Study directed by Leland Medsker and James Trent, of the Center for Higher Education in Berkeley, followed 10,000 high school graduates from 1959 to 1963. The research described the initial characteristics as well as the changes which took place for various groups of young people such as non-college youth, college dropouts, and those who remained in college throughout the four years of the study (9, 12).

Although other research will be drawn upon where appropriate, these represent the main sources of data, and they all involved the use of some kind of student questionnaire. When the replies of all students are put together they reveal some interesting differences between the backgrounds, attitudes, and aspirations of college men and women.

It is not new, but all of the research verifies the fact that college women tend to come from homes of higher socio-economic levels than do college men. Both the mothers and fathers of women are somewhat better educated, and the family income for women's homes is slightly higher. Men and women go to college in equal proportions only among the higher ability and socio-economic levels. The greatest differences in the proportion of men and women attending college seem to occur under three conditions: First, when ability is questionable, i.e. among students in the lowest 40% in ability, more men than women go to college. Secondly, when funds are limited, far more male than female high-ability students from low income families start college. And thirdly more men than women from middle class families enter college (9).

In our society, parents seem to feel that it is more important for a son to go to college than for a daughter (5), and this feeling is shared by the young people themselves. When asked how important a college education was for a man, 94% of the college women and 83% of the men said that it was very important. Nowhere near this degree of unanimity was obtained when students were asked to rate the importance of college for a woman; only one-half of the women and a fourth of the men ranked college equally important for a woman. Perhaps the double standard exists more in the abstract than in the concrete, however, since when the question was changed slightly to ask how important college was for themselves, 92% of the men and 90% of the women said it was very important (12).

We know, from many research studies, that encouragement from parents bears a high relationship to college attendance. And boys are more likely to get encouragement from their parents than are girls. Almost 70% of the high school senior men who enter college report "definite encouragement from parents," compared with about 60% for the women (11).

As far as funds are concerned, the women who get to college are more dependent upon parental pocketbooks than are the men. It is hard to determine, however, whether this is due to the higher parental incomes of the girls' families or whether it is a reflection of society's more ready acceptance of female financial dependence. At any rate, men are more likely to meet college expenses with jobs -- especially summer jobs -- and personal savings; women are more likely to derive major financial assistance from home (68% for women to 50% for men); and men and women draw upon loans and scholarships in just about equal proportions (1).

The fact that girls tend to make better grades than boys in high school may help to lower some of the barriers to college for women. There is no question that college women have much better high school records than do college men. The fact can be stated in a number of ways -- 43% of the college women graduate in the top 10% of their high school class compared with only 30% of the men (5); or in terms of grades, 67% of the women had B averages or better compared with only 45% of the men (1); or if we look at it in terms of the obstacle posed by poor grades, we might use the statistic that the proportion of boys who make it to college despite high school grades of C or lower is double that for girls -- 40% to 20% (1). By the time they graduate from college, however, men and women make the top grades in about equal proportions. There is still a tendency, however, for women to make somewhat higher averages since the women make the B's while men get the C's (4).

The things that students say about grades and the activities related to achieving them are quite revealing. In the first place college women see themselves as highly conscientious, and they say their classmates and teachers can perceive this trait too. Over half of the women state that they studied hard in high school, that their teachers and fellow students thought of them as hard workers, that they are pretty well satisfied with the grades that they made, and that the grades were a fair representation of their ability (5).

Although the college men were just as likely as the women to think that they worked harder than the typical high school student, as a group they sound a little as though high school had given them a raw deal. Over half of the men felt that their grades under-represented their ability, that their teachers did not think of them as hard workers, and while 71% of the women were satisfied with their high

school grades, only 59% of the men were. By their own admission, however, men spent fewer hours per day studying and somewhat more time watching television (5).

Putting all of these items together, a research picture emerges in which more women than men have positive feelings about their high school experiences. Although some of this differential may be due to the fact that society demands somewhat greater selectivity for the college woman, there is good evidence that even in the more unselected high school senior classes, girls appear to adapt themselves more readily to what is expected (2).

The sociologists like to speak of girls as more socialized than boys, and the data support this view. Girls, more than boys, are eager to conform to the adult culture. Fifty-five percent of the high school senior girls but only 35% of the boys care quite a lot what their teachers think of them (2); about the same proportion -- half of the college women but only one-third of the men say that it is very important to satisfy their parent's wishes (5).

Much has been made recently of the generation gap, and yet the research shows that young people of college age reflect very faithfully the attitudes and wishes of their parents. Liberal parents tend to raise liberal children, and conservative parents generally have conservative children (3). I'm not sure anymore just who devised the myth that young people have a basic mistrust of all people over thirty, but myth it is for most college youth. College students at twelve colleges involved in one study at the Center for Higher Education showed a low rate of agreement with the statement that "it is hard for a person over thirty

to really understand the young person today." On an average, less than a fourth of the women on the twelve campuses agreed and less than a third of the men. It is of interest here, however, to observe that on every campus, men were more likely to express the feelings of alienation implied in the statement than were women (8) and this finding appears consistent with other research data.

Now the research which pictures women as more closely and positively identified with teachers and parents may lead you to believe that it is the men who are sparking the campus demonstrations which are often -- mistakenly I think -- viewed as rebellions against authority. In the original Free Speech Movement at Berkeley, women were over represented in the demonstrating students by 13%. Whereas women made up about 39% of the Berkeley student body, they constituted 52% of the FSM students (13). I don't think this disproportionate number of women demonstrators is accidental nor is it peculiar to Berkeley. When we asked students on twelve campuses what role they would most likely play if there were a student protest on their campus regarding the support of civil rights, the percentage of women stating that they would be actively involved exceeded the percentage for men on every campus (8). With one college exception, the same results emerged when the issue for protest was the support of greater student involvement in determining campus policy. I suspect that deans of women will not be nearly as surprised as researchers to learn that when the issue was opposition to dormitory regulations, it was the men who were more willing to become actively involved. Generally speaking, however, students were not as willing to protest dormitory regulations as they were civil rights issues, the Vietnam war, or student involvement in campus policy. There are logical

and consistent explanations for these findings, I think. In the first place, we have already mentioned the fact that women who enter college are more likely to come from the more liberal backgrounds associated with the higher socio-economic status. This, coupled with the fact that women, particularly, show a camaraderie with the adult culture makes it highly likely that the protests <u>are</u> a reflection of liberal views rather than adolescent rebellion. One must note the fact, too, that civil rights, Vietnam, free speech, etc. are values espoused by the faculty culture. In this sense, the protests are in support of the adult culture with which college men and women identify and not in opposition to it. The tendency of women to show greater reluctance in demonstrating about dormitory regulations is, I think, a different issue, and it has to do with the double standard.

The double standard for men and women in our society is a fact of life which is accepted by most college women. Parents have different expectations and different concerns regarding sons and daughters, and the research contains some beautiful examples. According to the students, parents keep a much more watchful eye on the dating of girls. Whereas almost three-fourths of the men said that they made their own decisions about dating, less than half of the girls claimed such autonomy when high school seniors; and twice as many men as women made their own decision regarding curfew (2). Parents, by the way, seem to have kept a pretty firm hand on curfew for high school seniors for both men and women. Thirty per cent of the women and 22% of the men claim that they were told by their parents when to come in; half of the women and over a third of the men said that a joint decision was made, and only 16% of the women

and 32% of the men claimed autonomy of decision (2). The first questionnaire in the SCOPE study had seven questions regarding parental control, and the double standard is quite apparent in the pattern. Girls as a group had less autonomy than boys in matters of dating, friendships, and curfews; boys had less autonomy than girls in the matters of homework and television viewing, and there was not much difference on home chores nor on high school courses selected. One gathers that girls and their generally conscientious approach to grades do not pose quite the problem at homework and TV viewing time that the boys do, but that parents are more concerned about the activities of the girls when they are not under the parental eye. And so the feminine and masculine roles have rather deep roots in the parental culture.

Let's take a look now at the impact of some of the cultural role expectations on the ideas and values of the college woman. If you ask a high school senior woman who later enters college, what is the one most important reason for a girl to go to college, you will most likely get the answer that it is to secure vocational or professional training (29%), but almost as many (25%) are frank to admit that they think women go to college with the objective of meeting the right person to marry. Developing the mind and intellectual abilities attracts another quarter of the women (11). Boys, it should be noted, are much more likely than girls to think that the one most important reason for a girl to go to college is to meet her future husband (37%). Relatively small proportions of men attribute motivations of job training (16%) and intellectual development (17%) to women (11).

Combining the sexes, we come out with the conclusion that the largest proportion of young people in college today think that the husband-hunting motive is the one most important reason for a woman to

go to college. Now the form of the question used here is important. The students were asked, "What do you think is the one most important reason why most women go to college?" The questionnaire did not ask the respondent her own most important motive in seeking a college education. As we discovered earlier, only 50% of the college women think that a college education is very important for a woman, but 90% think it is very important for themselves. I suspect that the same cultural biases are operating in this question, and we might find that while many are willing to say that most girls go to college to find a mate, few are willing to say that that is their number one motive. Nevertheless, marriage is in the plans of practically all college women, and almost three-fourths of them think that there is at least some chance that they will marry within a year after college (1). Not only is marriage the immediate goal, but women also expect their life-long satisfactions to derive from marriage and family; 55% of them expect the family to give them the greatest satisfaction in life. The only other activity that even comes close is career, but this attracted only 18% (11).

And yet, by and large, today's college woman appears to make a fairly realistic assessment about her future role in the labor market. The women in the Center's twelve college study were startlingly realistic about working outside the home. Although the proportion varied from campus to campus, on the average campus half of the women expected to work either full or part-time for the major portion of their lives. Women from the more selective academically oriented colleges were more likely than women attending less selective institutions to express the expectation of working outside the home(8).

As freshmen, men are more conservative than women regarding the

question of women working outside the home: 27% of the men but only 7% of the freshmen women think that women's activities should be generally confined to home and family. But as they progress through college, men become less conservative and women more so until upperclass men and women are pretty close to agreement on the issue. With 17% of the males and 13% of the females agreeing that women's place is in the home (5, 6).

Because we think that college women have the opportunity to fulfill their potential by working at jobs commensurate with their ability, we may make the mistake of thinking that college women become increasingly interested in the careers that are open to them. This appears not to be the case. As women progress through college, their interests shift from careers to the more traditional interests of home and family. The largest proportion of freshmen women (42%) say that 15 years hence they would prefer to be a married career woman with children but for upperclass women, the preferred future is that of a housewife with children. Whereas only 35% of the freshmen women prefer the housewife role, 50% of the upperclassmen do (5, 6). These observations which are derived from the norms of the College Student Questionnaires were also found in interviews of bright college women which were conducted by the Center. The interviewers reported that while freshmen and sophomore women were giving serious thought to their educational and professional futures, by the time they were interviewed as seniors, they expressed less intensity of commitment to further education (7).

Along the same lines and equally surprising is the fact that the percentage of women who describe their college purposes as primarily academic -- i.e. interest in ideas, the pursuit of knowledge, and the cultivation of the intellect -- drops from 21% as freshmen to 12% as

upperclassmen. Interest in vocational training drops from 25% for the freshmen to 20% for the upperclassmen. The slack seems to be taken up by the increase in the number expressing interest in the well-rounded woman described by the collegiate subculture which values social life, rewarding friendships, living group functions, etc. Whereas only 44% of the freshmen felt that these so-called collegiate activities were the most important college goals, 57% of the upper classmen find their satisfaction with college best expressed in these college experiences. Now I do not think that this means that women become anti-intellectual and disinterested in scholarship as they progress through our colleges. As a matter of fact, there is research evidence to indicate that women grow in terms of flexibility, openness to new ideas, and interest in reflective thought -- traits which are usually associated with intellectual interests (12).

What it probably does mean is that as the choices of marriage or career loom closer, women opt for marriage as the immediate concern and their attention moves in this direction. But there is also a widespread phenomenon of academic disillusionment which occurs in college.

For both men and women the satisfactions expected from scholarly activities when they are freshmen are considerably greater than the satisfactions which they actually find as upperclassmen. Whereas almost half of the freshmen women expect their greatest satisfaction to come from course work, less than one-fifth of the upperclassmen report that they found academic pursuits the most rewarding aspect of the college experience. Association with fellow students seems to be a relatively unexpected satisfaction deriving from college life. Only 11% of the freshmen women but an astounding 41% of the upperclassmen found

that friendships gave them the greatest satisfaction to be found in college. The men showed the same trend but not nearly to as marked a degree (6).

One can, I suppose, interpret these findings in a variety of ways, and most likely it is a combination of many factors. As personnel administrators, you would be remiss if you did not observe that the extra-curricular program and the informal associations between students surpass student expectations whereas the academic falls short of expectations. As deans of women you might also be justified in noting that more women than men show a satisfaction with the out-of-class activities that surpassed their expectations. Perhaps we should not dwell too long upon these badges of success, however, because there are so many other reasonable hypotheses. For one thing, our present publicity about colleges with its emphasis upon competitive admissions, academic excellence, and an aura of the community of scholars is not altogether realistic, and only a few colleges are able to live up to this advanced billing. It is understandable that there is a kind of academic disillusionment that takes place for large numbers of men and women. Related to the emphasis upon academic pursuits by the pre-college publicity is the seriousness with which college freshmen approach their task. It is really not quite acceptable for freshmen entering college to state that they expect friendships to be one of their most rewarding college experiences. Upperclassmen are probably somewhat more honest and more realistic in their appraisal.

When all of the research data are taken together, the pattern depicting dual lives for women emerges with startling clarity. While most expect to have careers -- or at least to work outside the home -- it is fairly clear that marriage and family life take priority, and we might look now at some of the ways in which women go about preparing for this objective.

Deeply imbedded in the folklore is the dictum that women -- whether in marriage or career -- should remain femininely submissive and non-agressive, and there is some evidence that college women accept this role. About half of the men but only a third of the women say that they enjoy competitive situations. The objectives which women consider important are distinctly non-competitive when compared with men's objectives. In the ACE survey at least 10% more women than men considered the following objectives to be essential or very important: To help others in difficulty, to join the Peace Corps or Vista, and to create works of art. Men were far more likely than women to endorse objectives such as: Obtain recognition from peers, be administratively responsible, be well off financially, become a community leader, and succeed in business (1). Although there appears to be no discrimination in the election of women to leadership positions -- exactly 22% of the men and 22% of the college women had served as president of a student organization in high school (10), women are considerably less likely than men to feel that leadership is one of the very important things in their lives (25% to 40%) (2). For women it is somewhat more important to be popular (68% to 58% for men).

The research data also indicate that women as a group have less confidence in themselves than men. Despite the fact that women make much better grades in high school than men, they are less likely to feel that they definitely have the ability to do college work (26% to 35%) (11). And college women tend to express less self-confidence than men on a variety of traits presented by the ACE questionnaire. One would expect fewer women than men to feel special competence in the masculine areas of mathematical, mechanical, and athletic abilities. But it is also a fact that fewer women than men rated themselves above

average on the following: leadership, popularity in general, popularity with the opposite sex, and intellectual self-confidence as well as social self-confidence. The only traits on which more women than men rated themselves above average were artistic ability, cheerfulness, understanding of others, and sensitivity to criticism (1).

Despite all of the emancipation of recent years and despite the extensive publicity given to Betty Friedan's best seller, there does seem to be a "feminine mystique" to which college women subscribe. Actually, the college woman of today has ample justification for feeling that she is juggling three possible identities throughout her college career. She has one eye out for a husband, another out for practical job training that will enable her to type or to teach wherever her husband may be located, and we also expect her to fulfill her potential as an intellectual being. Not only do all these choices face her in college, but she knows quite well that they will face her the rest of her life. To my mind, this means that we should not be too hasty to erase all distinctions between education for men and education for women. The immediate as well as life-long goals of men and women do differ and thus the concept of relevance in education needs careful consideration. By this, I do not mean to imply that we should return to the era of prescribing homemaking and family relations curricula for women, nor do I think that general education in the liberal arts is the necessary alternative. I do believe that new flexibilities are called for and that the time for introducing innovations in education has never been more promising than it is right now. By flexibility, I'm not referring only to the flexibilities of course load, scheduling, financial aid, etc.

that have become so much a part -- and rightly so -- of the programs of continuing education for women. I have focused my remarks today on the education of the 17 to 20 year old undergraduate because, while I think we are moving ahead in adult education for women I rather fear that we are moving backward in our provisions for excellence in the education of young unmarried women.

Let me give one example of a kind of flexibility that we're not making nearly enough use of. I happen to be of the conviction that independent study is really what education is all about, but I think that it is especially important for a woman. Research evidence already suggests that women who engage in full time homemaking after high school graduation do not show the same kind of intellectual growth and development as women who enter college. As a matter of fact, as a group, housewives show a rather remarkable regression on research measures designed to measure intellectual interests. Thus four years after high school graduation they are less interested in ideas and the use of their minds than they were when they graduated from high school (12). If a woman is going to be intellectually alive at all through the years of raising a family, the motivation pretty well has to come from within herself. We cannot honestly say that we've provided a woman with a good education until we have taught her <u>how</u> to learn and <u>how</u> to derive the satisfactions that can be found in intellectually stimulating activity. The type of magazine one reads and the television programs one watches, for example, become habits, and they are habits that can make a large difference.

We have already noted the fact that one of the traits of most

college women is that they feel they are conscientious and hard working. I see no reason to doubt the premise that most can manage the discipline of independent study and that this type of learning activity should be introduced as early as possible in women's college careers.

The flexibility of independent study has another advantage for women and that is that it helps to bridge the gap between making a firm choice between the overly practical homemaking courses and the all-too-frequently purely graduate-college oriented academic courses. Why, for example, shouldn't a woman write an academically respectable sociology paper on the problems of the growing gap between male executives who travel in an increasingly sophisticated world and their wives who stay home and raise children, as did their mothers and grandmothers before them? Is this necessarily a topic reserved for a course in marriage and the family? Or why can't one delve into the problems of the social pressures practiced by groups of young children in an independent psychology paper just as well as in a course labeled child development?

I do not want to leave the impression, while arguing for flexibility, that I would rigidly eliminate the options of courses in marriage and the family or child development. Some college women are ready to make the choice between marriage and graduate school but many more are not. There are all kinds of reasons -- educational as well as pragmatic -- why a woman should be encouraged to develop an academic program suited to her needs and interests. We need desperately, to give her the opportunity to do so. As higher education tackles the problem of relevance in education; we must raise the question, relevance for what?

The life aims and purposes of women are different in some respects from those of men. It seems likely that "relevance" may have different meanings for various students and that the sex of students constitutes a major consideration.

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